## Documenting, communicating and learning for change: CPWF KM consolidation strategy

## 1. Background

The CGIAR Challenge Program on Water and Food has grown, learned and matured since its establishment in 2002. Phase 1 (2002-2007) comprised more than 68 projects working in 10 river basins. For Phase 2, integrated basin-level programs focused on specific R4D challenges were established in six river basins (Andes System of Basins, Ganges, Limpopo, Mekong, Nile and Volta). These basin programs run in a decentralized fashion with program-level support focused on synthesizing lessons, sharing knowledge and influencing different stakeholders.

Most of CPWF is integrating into the CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems and it is essential that its knowledge is captured, shared and influences decisions of different groups both within the CGIAR and outside. CPWF’s challenge is to demonstrate its credibility, relevance and legitimacy to different audiences. As mentioned at the Basin Leader meeting in February, there is a need for the scientists to deliver ‘science’ but also CPWF also needs to demonstrate the effectiveness of its R4D processes and show the cost-benefits of such an intensive appraoch.

This concept note provides an initial set of ideas to document and communicate the BDC experiences so that different stakeholders can use the knowledge and learning generated. It builds on and is part of the Learning Initiative concept being proposed. It also provides an overview of how we intend to document the CPWF legacy.

## 2. Current knowledge management processes and products

The CPWF knowledge management is a family of inter-linked disciplines (M&E, information management, communication). Between these disciplines the boundaries are increasingly blurred in terms of processes, systems and information being generated, stored or made available. What binds us together is the practice of social learning as it provides a framework for knowledge management which facilitates knowledge sharing and joint learning experiences between stakeholders. It is not a linear process but one of interaction and joint action[[1]](#footnote-1).

CPWF focuses on three broad areas that we are concerned with for these purposes.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * **Monitoring and evaluation** focused on the reporting, most significant change stories and institutional/innovation histories | Social learning processes cuts across these areas and ensures that we reaching the impact pathways and theories of change identified at the program level.  This includes facilitating workshops and learning events and knowledge sharing such as IFWF, yammer and other interactive learning fora |
| * **Information management** particularly collecting documents, presentations, photos, videos and other outputs from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 |
| * **Communication** which include working papers, dialogue posters, outcome stories, research highlights briefing notes, videos, CPWF website and blog |

|  |
| --- |
| **Lessons from Phase 1 documentation and learning process**  For Phase 1, a process was developed to harvest, marshal and document results and product, including:   1. The submitted technical reports from the 68 Phase 1 projects were externally reviewed and improved, and laid out before being publically released (which took a lot of time and resources) 2. The identification of 19 marketable innovations which were transformed into a project for IFAD on mainstreaming CPWF Marketable innovations into IFAD grants 3. Phase 1 resource package including dialogue posters, outcome stories and sourcebook articles 4. Phase 1 outputs inputted (more than 1700 objects) in the CPWF Repository (CG Space).   Key lessons that should drive the development of Phase 2 documentation and learning include:   * Timing - The process was started after projects ended. This meant it was difficult to collect learning and information since project staff had moved on to new tasks and had no more time allocation left to spend resources. * Focus - The process focused on ‘harvesting’, marshaling and repackaging and there was little ‘social’ or collective learning in the process. * Capacity and Resources - The resource package has been difficult to finalize due to missing capacity from the actual project teams and the multi-level approach for dissemination and repackaging at the basin level has yet to emerge. * Formats - The Project reporting formats were long, not finished in a timely manner, and their length also impacted negatively on the review process and their final approval. |

## 3. Objectives and stakeholder groups

The overall goal is to ensure that CPWF lessons and results are mainstreamed into CGIAR reform processes and development processes at different levels. It pre-supposes that CPWF activities will end in 2014 but will be continued on in one form or another at the basin level and through different programs within the CGIAR or our partners.

The objectives are to:

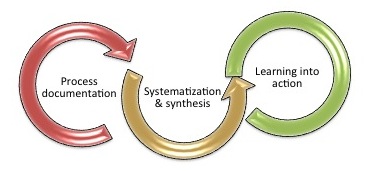
* Ensure that outputs and lessons are captured using a triple-A (available, accessible and applicable) framework.
* Document CPWF learning and knowledge at different levels both in scientific and non-scientific formats.
* Promote collective learning amongst partners and key stakeholders so that knowledge can be used in their own decision-making processes and allow contextualization to happen.

Key stakeholder groups would be identified from each basin level impact pathway. At the global level, the impact pathways focus are shown below. For the most part, the strategy would be to develop products and processes which not only allow these actors to read about CPWF experiences but also learn and see for themselves. The order of stakeholder groups is also prioritized here so that we see the main targets from the program level. It will be crucial to get the CGIAR and key CRP leadership on board.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stakeholder group** | **Change in KAS identified** | **Potential strategies** |
| CGIAR Consortium and CRP Leadership Teams (particularly CRP5 and SRP leaders) | Are convinced that the CPWF way of working is relevant and appropriate for CRPs and understand how to use and apply these lessons | Briefing notes, outcome stories, study tours, presentations, special issues journals, participation at meetings |
| Development investors | Understand CPWF business approach and linkages between process, technical and institutional innovations and believe that investments in basins will leverage change | Outcome stories, briefing notes, study tours, short videos |
| Policy advisors and makers and advisory bodies (Media) | Understand the implications of BDC evidence- based research results and knowledge and can use in their decision-making | Briefing notes, media outreach at all levels, short videos |
| Development intermediaries | Understand how research results can be scaled into development and investments in BDC will lead to development change | Sourcebook and tools |
| Researchers and research managers in Intern organizations, NARES and universities | Improved capacity to harness research to innovation processes, including: skills for inter-disciplinary research, adaptive management, technical science and communication | Briefing notes, outcome stories, tools, study tours, presentations, special issues journals |

## 4. Approach

The conceptual basis for this approach is steeped in triple loop learning which has been adapted for documentation and learning purposes. Yuthas, et al (2004 p. 239) define triple-loop learning as “a continual reflection on the learning process, the contexts within which learning occurs, and the assumptions and values motivating the learning and influencing its outcomes.” The reason such an approach is emphasized is that for R4D it is recognized that the “Publish and pray” method of conventional research documentation will take too long and not lead to the changes expected in different target groups.



In this sense, our approach follows the three steps along the triple loop learning:

1. Focus on capturing our learning, making sure materials are captured, science is communicated and processes and methods are documented and each project has attained its outputs (first loop).
2. Focus on actual group learning where we start to synthesize and integrate results into different learning processes with key stakeholders (second loop).
3. Learning becomes action and the results and lessons from CPWF are actually used in other circumstance (third loop).

The proposed approach above is based on the following principles:

* **Working through CRPs and partners**: For the most part, work will be channeled through CRP5 and CRP1.3 as well interested center partners as a strategy to ensure the results and lessons are being applied. Monitoring and evaluation should be linked to the emerging M&E and Learning system being developed in CRP5 since that is where the program goes through. Communication activities should feed into CRP5 and CRP1.3 communication and knowledge management. Thus, it is important to focus on some of the results which CRP5 and CRP1.3 will find useful and important. It also means that more scientific articles can be nurtured and supported after the CPWF officially ends.
* **Decentralized approach**: Each CPWF basin will develop its own strategy but be linked to a wider programmatic strategy. This will be done through a process of discussion and negotiation between Basin Leaders, basin KM staff and program level. The program strategy should focus on synthesis and adding value to basin level experiences, rather than trying to duplicate efforts
* **Working in an inter-disciplinary fashion** with KM & Research Team and Basins Leaders to identify stories, good science and outcomes that can be documented in various ways.
* **Learning and participatory approaches** will be used to develop materials that enhance learning and up-take of findings. For example, writeshops will be used to promote learning and ensure the desired quality by engaging the experts directly into this step.

## 5. Potential Activities

This initial list is just a brainstorm of activities of what is possible at the program level. At the basin level a range of other activities would be carried out focused on supporting the impact pathways identified.

### Monitoring and evaluation

**Final report and developing a suitable format**

There will be a need to developing format for reporting which is simple, compliant and allows for project learning. Based on last Phase lessons this should be less intensive and provide researchers and projects more time to focus on outputs which will be targeted and for use.

**Process documentation/on-going documentation**

1. Further developing and finalizing most significant change stories and developing these into outcome stories from different projects
2. On-going documentation through research highlights, blogs, field stories and analysis.

### Information Management

**Collecting outputs from different system**

We now have systems in place to collect and widely distribute different outputs generated such as CGspace, flickr, youtube, slideshare, and knowledge tree. A lot of work would be with basin KM team and coordination and change projects to support capturing the information and placing it in the appropriate spaces.

### Documentation & Learning & Sharing

The activities below are divided into two categories. First that are currenltly finded as higher priority. Second that we will fund based on our funding situation is known after November.

**a. Priority funded activities**

* The “**CPWF Metasynthesis**” will be the major scientific output from CPWF. It will encompass experiences from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 and place them in the context of the principle messages from Basin Focal Projects and the Comprehensive Assessment, and linking them with the new program of work in Phase 2. This will most likely come out as a special issue and a book.
* **Innovations / Institutional Histories:** These case histories will focus on learning at both the coordination and change project level and program levels. An institutional history is “*a* ***narrative*** *that records key points about how* ***institutional arrangements*** *– new ways of working –* ***evolve over time*** *creating more effective ways to achieve goals. It can be used to document institutional innovations in projects and to highlight barriers to change. An institutional history draws out and synthesizes* ***lessons for research organisation and partners*** *as well as for others in similar circumstances”[[2]](#footnote-2)*. In November, the first set of IH’s will be produced through a workshop
* **IFAD grant on mainstreaming innovations**: CPWF has a grant on mainstreaming innovations in IFAD programs. This was supposed to focus on 19 phase 1 projects but can be expanded to ensure lessons/experiences from basins are also included. This is particularly true for regional/national sharing activities that will take place with IFAD.

**b. Potential activities for 2013**

* **Write-shops**: consider holding a series of “writeshops” on key themes and issues which are of interest to different stakeholder, particularly CRP5 leaders. Potential topics include: innovation platforms, modeling, gender impacts, rainwater management systems (across Africa), etc. Writeshops are ideal ways to both promote learning and get products out in a timely fashion.
* Support special **journal issues or science writeshops** for projects. Basin coordinators would like to see writeshops/support to developing special issue journals to highlight scientific content.

* **Support to basins communicators to capture stories**: hire videographers and writers to help support basin KM staff in writing up stories, interviewing researchers, etc.
* **Provide small funding for basin documentation:** provide basins with funding to document experiences which can feed into different outputs

### Building on existing communication and outreach products

Pre-existing forms of communication products that could be continued include the following:

* **Working papers**: need to think about how much we still want to be involved in this and if we have the capacity to do this after the final set are involved. These might be developed as part of CRP5 and included in this series.
* **Briefing notes**: briefing note series would be developed and continued. Briefing notes are something that could be branded with CRP5
* **Outcome stories**: will be an important area to build on the MSCs and develop issue-focused stories
* **Sourcebook articles/tool boxes and methods** – focused primarily for development practitioners, these would translate approaches and tools for uptake (adoption/adaptation?)
* Short videos on key highlights and success stories

### Outreach and promotion of learning

* Highlight CPWF’s success and lessons at Basin SRP meetings
* Work with Reuters Alertnet and the New Agriculturalist to disseminate stories
* Hold 1-2 media campaigns on new research insights – particularly focused on meta-synthesis of Phase 1
* Put our research and insights onto other people’s blogs
* Hold some key events at Stockholm World Water Week 2013
* Organize a ‘share fair’ (IFWF4) which focuses less on internal actors and more on sharing results with a wider community
* Host webinars on selected cases/topics and issues
* Promote website as a central area for dissemination of Phase 2 results

## 6. Open Issues

* Issue of impacts and impact assessment is missing? How do we measure the impacts we have had. How do we show that our very time-consuming, participatory and networked approach is more effective than traditional shot-gun research approach
* Time and resources for both basin level activities and global level activities.

## 7. Next steps

* Virtual workshop with Basin/KM staff to discuss and elaborate plan and develop basin level plans (Aug-Sept 2012)
* Revise proposal (October)
* Institutional history workshop – work with Basin leaders to finalize activities and processes and see where we are with funding (November)

1. CCAFS.2012. Climate change and social learning [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Prasad, Hall and Thummuru, Engaging scientists through institutional histories, ILAC brief 14, 2006 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)